1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
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dele, and the Tain-Daware. They then reappear on the river Waria, to the north of the last-mentioned tribes. Their distribution excludes in the main that of the small dramas for which the Orokaiva are famous, these latter belonging especially to the Aiga, Binandele, and Tain-Daware.[1] Thus bull-roarer and flute on the one hand, and drama on the other tend to be mutually exclusive. It is noteworthy that the miniature drum, *saunda*, is confined to those three tribes who practice the drama.

Another significant distribution may be mentioned, viz. that of the yam. This vegetable is grown over the whole of the plain, but far less commonly in the north than the south, though it is not, as far as I know, debarred by climatic causes from flourishing in any part. But the yam-house and the extensive cultivation of yams disappear north of Divina Kovari, so that their distribution seems to correspond in some degree with that of the bull-roarer and the sacred flute.

Save for these few distinctions between South and North, the exclusive presence of bull-roarer, flute, and yam in the one, and of the drama and the *saunda* in the other, I have not been able to see any really important distinctions between the various component tribes of the Orokaiva. It may be stated with some confidence that the groundwork of their customs and institutions is the same throughout.

It is on the assumption of general uniformity among the tribes that the present report claims to refer to the people as a whole. The tribe with which I am best acquainted is that of the Aiga, who seemed to offer the best opportunities for research because they are fairly central and as yet less contaminated by European influence than most of the others. Out of a total Orokaiva population of some 9,000, this tribe numbers approximately 1,300, who are scattered in nearly fifty villages on or between the Opi and Kumusi rivers. To avoid confusion it will be the rule of this report to use the Aiga dialectal form for native words.

[1] I am not ready to say that the drama never appears among the Southern tribes. At any rate I cannot speak with any certainty about the Hunjara.

1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
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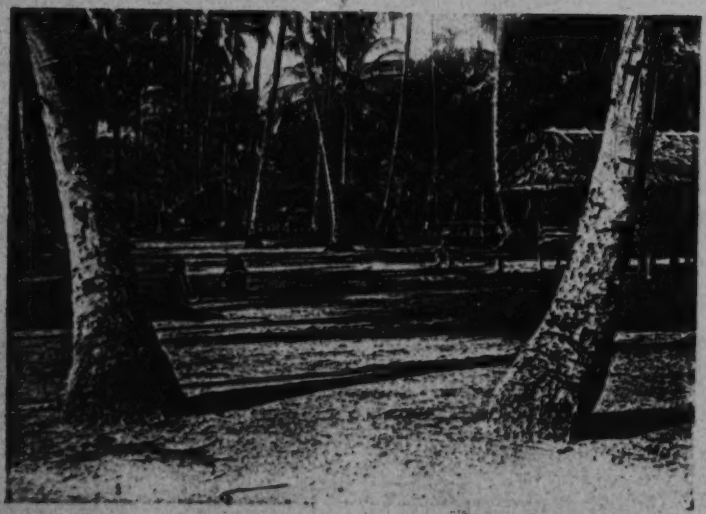
(*a*) On the Middle Opi



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(*b*) The Village of Poho

PLATE III [facing p. 22]

1: Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
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# VI

# ARTS OF LIFE

## *The Village*

361 THE typical Orokaiva village would comprise hardly more than a dozen houses, and many settlements are much smaller. In former times, if native accounts are to be trusted, villages were more extensive through need of mutual protection against the raider; and a resident magistrate patrolling the river Gira in 1901 speaks of a village 200 yards long by two chains broad, which contained seventy-one houses and was 'barricaded in with a look-out and fighting platforms on the stockade'.[1] But nowadays pacification has brought about a tendency to scatter in small isolated groups.

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The bush settlement is closely surrounded by walls of forest, so that the view is somewhat depressingly circumscribed; among the Salt-Water People the village stands virtually on the margin of the beach; among the River People it is invariably placed on the river bank. In most cases and in so far as the floods allow, it is well situated on dry ground. The modern village, by Government edict, is kept almost scrupulously clean, and when the visit of a patrol is imminent one may see old folk and children engaged in the meticulous removal of weeds. At all times, however, it is fairly well swept by the women. Refuse of coco-nut husks and the like is thrown away beyond the edge of the clearing, and for sanitary arrangements there is the privacy of the circumambient bush. Much of the credit for the cleanliness of the village is due to the tireless scavenging of pigs.

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## *The House*

342 In most instances the houses are set in two regular rows, facing one another. The space between, sporadically planted with coco-nut palms, is the scene of dances, plays, and inter-

[1] A. L. Walker, *Annual Report*, 1900–1, p. 33.

[p. 68]

2: Williams E, G-5 (1923-1925) 1928
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diate locality where he has worked, and accordingly we sometimes find an easy-going division of an area between families or branches of the clan. No doubt this becomes a stricter division where the available land is circumscribed; for individual ownership of land probably has its origin in scarcity of land.

The examples I have given come from the Aiga tribe, between the middle Opi and Kumusi rivers, where there is no practical limit to cultivable soil, and where, indeed, there still remains a good deal of apparently virgin forest. On the foot-hill country in the south of the Division, where the population is often denser, and in particular on the Buna plains, where the *kurokuro* grass has encroached on the bush to so serious an extent, the same system indeed prevails, but the intervening periods must be shortened.

As will readily be imagined, this system tends to bring about a shifting, almost nomadic, style of horticulture. Sometimes the area is at no small distance from the permanent village. Then we shall find families living for weeks at a time in their garden houses, while their more regular but scarcely superior dwellings in the village stand deserted, with a mat fastened across the doorway. The gardener may plant coco-nuts and betel on the site of his temporary lodging: this is the first step towards the establishment of a new village. By the time that ground comes to be cleared and planted again, these palms will have grown to a good size, and it is very natural, with a people so perpetually given to clan disintegration, that some families should settle permanently on the site of their distant gardens. This, in my opinion, is the ordinary reason for the simultaneous birth of a new village and a new clan.

### 5. *Clearing and Deforestation*

One was at first tempted to believe that this Rotation of Areas, with such long intervening periods, was devised like the fallow in the interest of fertility. The

2: Williams E, G-5 (1923-1925) 1928
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of it will reside in the present system of an *extensive* and extravagant use of the land by its native owners. Apart from the other advantages which should attend a more *intensive* cultivation, it should make available great areas of land (if they are required) for European enterprise. Lastly, the Rotation of Areas is indirectly responsible for the deforestation of the north. This question has been discussed already (pp. 131–3). We have seen that the spread of the grass lands is due proximately to the negligence of the natives, but it is the fact that the scene of their labours is constantly changing that makes the expansion of the grass plains a serious problem.

Apart from these economic drawbacks the system which I have described exercises a moral or social influence which seems directly inimical to progress. The tendency of the Orokaiva (and of many other peoples in Papua) to subdivide and scatter has caused the magistrate continual anxiety and trouble; and the undesirability of this habit has long been recognized. As the Native Regulation expresses it,

> 'The practice of people abandoning their old homes in settled villages and scattering themselves in small groups over the face of the country is growing in the land. Experience proves that this isolated way of living tends to breed animosities, and increase superstitious fears and to debase those that follow it.'[1]

In pre-Government days, if the natives are to be believed, the villages were very commonly larger than they are at present. Tribal enmities and the constant fear of raiders made it necessary for the members of the clan to cluster together for mutual protection. But with the advent of Government control this fear has passed away. The individual clan or even family feels secure from attack however isolated it may be. Consequently we find a growing tendency for the small group to form an independent settlement. I have already referred to this matter (p. 129) but a repetition may be pardoned.

[1] Native Regulations, 1922, No. 90.

2: Williams E, G-5 (1923-1925) 1928
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My own observations lead me to believe that the commonest way for such an independent settlement to come into being is for a few related families, or sometimes a single family, to form a temporary settlement or camp on the distant site of the garden. In the very simple organization of the Orokaiva the family group is self-sufficing. There is no economic necessity for cohesion between family groups, and to avoid the trouble of coming and going the temporary settlement is easily converted into a permanent one on the spot where its supplies are found. Thus it will appear that the habit of making gardens on distant sites, and of changing these sites from time to time, tends to encourage a shifting, semi-nomadic kind of horticulture. There can be little doubt that the Rotation of Areas system is one of the most potent causes of village and clan disintegration.

(*b*) *Intensive Culture and Closer Settlement.* The remedy for these negative and positive evils lies, I believe, in a more intensive culture and in the closer settlement which would accompany it. Instead of a wide area of forest with here and there a patch titillated into temporary productiveness and then overwhelmed by the tropical bush or sometimes subjugated by the ever-advancing long grass, we might hope to see a continuous tract of land, a garden settlement, which, if not kept under continuous cultivation, might still be kept under human control. Such may be a very distant ideal, but I believe the advantages which would come of its realization may be expressed in more general terms than those of mere gardening.

It has been affirmed often enough that various civilizations have been based upon various kinds of agriculture, or even upon the cultivation of particular products; as for instance those of Egypt upon corn, of Mexico and Peru upon maize, even that of Uganda upon the banana. Such statements are perhaps more plausible than really demonstrable: they are usually backed up less by facts than by inferences. However, it may well be that

4: Chinnery & Haddon E-5 (ca. 1915)1917
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there would be a violent thunderstorm. From the black clouds would dart vivid flashes of lightning, and there would fall a deluge of rain. Then a furious gale was to arise which would work untold havoc in certain places along the coast. The foundations of the earth would be shaken, and, as a result of the earthquake, an eruption would take place in the middle of the bay between Wagawaga and Gabugabuna, causing a new island to appear above the waves. In consequence a tidal wave would arise and spread further desolation and engender the submergence of all the coasts thereabout for two or three months. Thus destruction would be the lot of the unbeliever, but those would be spared who complied with the behests of the Spirit, as transmitted by the prophet. First and foremost, no man might possess anything introduced by the *dindim* (white man). He must part with his treasured matchboxes, tomahawks, knives, and other appliances, which rendered life pleasant or reduced toil; for these objects were the symbols of foreign domination, and in the new era old ways would be re-established. There would be a reversion to the stone age, implying the revival of ancient wont and custom and of the religion of their forefathers. New things must pass away, and the golden age of the past must be resuscitated in the present. As an outward and visible sign of the state of grace the faithful were to wear in their armlets a *bisare*, or long narrow ribbon of leaf that almost reached the ground. Finally, they were to burn their houses and take to the highest peaks in the ranges,—for, like the cities of the plain, the old habitations were to be swept out of existence by the catastrophes of nature. As the houses of foreigners are generally built close to the shore, it would seem as though the wheat was to be removed with the tares, since the tidal wave could scarcely be expected to discriminate between the two types of houses. The faithful villagers of Gabugabuna actually left their old village on the shore and built new houses not more than half a mile inland, but on the same level. They were told to go inland. And they did. But it did not occur to these faithful souls, or to their prophet, that the mundane laws of hydrostatics would inevitably cause their new abode to be flooded if the coast were submerged. Such is unreasoning faith. When the catastrophe was past, the wind would change to the south-east, the quarter from which blow refreshing winds during the greater part of the year, and the land would be covered with gardens of yams, taro, and other native food, and the trees would be laden with delicious fruits. The south-east wind would waft a huge vessel into their